

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(81) 11 final

Brussels, 22nd January 1981

COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL

on the programme to encourage use of
flax fibres for the 1980/81 marketing year

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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Article 1 paragraph 3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2511/80 on measures to encourage the use of flax fibres for the 1980/81 and 1981/82 marketing years provides that the Commission shall forward to the Council the programme of measures which it proposes to take.

This Communication contains the programme of measures for the 1980/81 marketing year.

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on the programme to encourage use of flax fibres for the 1980/81 marketing year

1. In order to avoid an imbalance between supply and forecast demand of flax fibres following some difficulty in disposal of these products, the Council adopted, on 30 September 1980, Regulation (EEC) No 2511/80⁽¹⁾ on measures to encourage the use of flax fibres for the 1980/81 and 1981/82 marketing years. Article 1 of that Regulation makes provision for measures to encourage the use of flax, covering:

- information campaigns in the Member States,
- research into new outlets and improved products.

It also lays down that these measures are to be adopted by the Commission after the Commission has forwarded to the Council the programme of measures it proposes to take.

This communication covers the programme of measures the Commission intends to take under Regulation (EEC) No 2511/80 for the 1980/81 marketing year. For that year, the forecast cost of the measures in question has been fixed at 600,000 ECU, 459,000 of which are provided by keeping back part (7.94 ECU) of the flat rate aid per hectare provided for textile flax.

2. In recent years, the trend in outlets for flax has had the following characteristics:

- a sharp fall in overall consumption of flax fibre and linen within the Community⁽²⁾,
- an alteration in the balance of total consumption of finished products: some articles such as technical materials and bed linen have lost a lot of ground, whereas others, such as material for curtaining, clothing, wall coverings and soft luggage are rising considerably.

(1) OJ No L 256, 1.10.1980, p. 61

(2) Consumption of finished products is very difficult to estimate but consumption of flax fibres in the Community of Nine may be put at about 80,000 t for 1979/80, compared with 115,000 t for 1970/71.

The Commission has studied this pattern in outlets for flax and feels that an upturn in flax sales should be sought in:

- maintaining and winning back some 'classical' outlets (where it has recently been proved that a sustained effort in renewal is very worthwhile) and a further increase in penetration in the sectors which are expanding;
- technical and commercial development of certain improved products (for example, compounds of flax fibres and other fibres) and creation of new products.

3. The Commission feels it can attain the objectives through the following programme:

A. Information campaigns

In view of the small amount of finance available and the limited period envisaged for the campaign on the one hand and, on the other hand, the limited retail sales network for flax, direct information campaigns aimed at final consumers (campaigns aimed at the public using mass media) do not appear to represent the most suitable way of employing the resources available.

In these circumstances, the effort should be concentrated on trade circles who 'guide' final consumers and on a policy of taking part in specialised trade fairs.

B. Research into new outlets and improved products

In view of the very rapid advance in consumer requirements and in the range of products available to them, the Commission feels it should encourage

- research aimed at creating improved products, including improvements through perfect compound of flax with other fibres,
- research aimed at finding completely new outlets for flax fibres, on the analogy of some studies undertaken in the United States in particular for cotton linters.

4. The Commission points out that this programme is part of a wider range of measures to encourage use of flax. The flax trade was encouraged by the undertaking made by the Council in Regulation (EEC) No 2511/80 and decided to step up the effort undertaken in the last few years to promote consumption. It has therefore undertaken to achieve in 1981, under the

responsibility of the International Linen and Hemp Confederation (CILC), an information and publicity campaign for a total sum of about 1.3 million ECU, about 85% of which is for the Community market.

The Commission will ensure, in carrying out its programme, that there is no overlapping or contradiction with measures undertaken by the trade.

5. In view of the limited period the programme is to run and the need to achieve the required results in the short term, the Commission feels it must concentrate effort on information campaigns and proposes accordingly to devote 450,000 ECU (75% of the total) to these campaigns. However, that figure is of a purely indicative nature and the Commission reserves the right to review the amounts according to requirements at the time the detailed programme is drawn up. The Council will be informed of any substantial change in this respect.

In view of the type of measure envisaged, it is difficult to forecast a geographical breakdown. However, the Commission will take account as far as possible of the following three criteria:

- scale of production,
- consumption,
- potential for increase in that consumption.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Date : 5 January 1981

1. BUDGET HEADING : 7302

APPROPRIATIONS : 1,0 mio UCE

2. TITLE : Commission communication to the Council on the programme to encourage use of flax fibres for the 1980/81 marketing year.

3. LEGAL BASIS : Reg. 2511/80 of the Council

4. AIMS OF PROJECT : Programme to encourage use of flax fibres.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS	CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR (81)	FOLLOWING FINANCIAL YEAR (82)
5.0 EXPENDITURE			
- CHARGED TO THE EC BUDGET (RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS)	600 000 ECU	600 000 ECU (1)	-
- NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION			
- OTHER			
5.1 RECEIPTS			
- OWN RESOURCES OF THE EC (LEVIES/CUSTOMS DUTIES)			
- NATIONAL			

5.0.1 ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE
5.1.1 ESTIMATED RECEIPTS

5.2 METHOD OF CALCULATION

6.0 CAN THE PROJECT BE FINANCED FROM APPROPRIATIONS ENTERED IN THE RELEVANT CHAPTER OF THE CURRENT BUDGET ?

YES/NO

6.1 CAN THE PROJECT BE FINANCED FROM APPROPRIATIONS ENTERED IN THE RELEVANT CHAPTER OF THE CURRENT BUDGET ?

YES/NO

6.2 CAN THE PROJECT BE FINANCED FROM APPROPRIATIONS ENTERED IN THE RELEVANT CHAPTER OF THE CURRENT BUDGET ?

YES/NO

6.3 WILL FUTURE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS BE NECESSARY ?

YES/NO

OBSERVATIONS : (1) The expense is covered by the credit written into the 1981 Budget. It should also be noted that 459 000 ECU of the amount in question was taken into consideration when fixing the flat rate aid for fibre flax.